chiefs, which they did. They interrupted the dances and refused to recognize the Komo which was dissolved, leaving the chief alone. But Garou, who had lied, died shortly after that.

The chief of Kankan carried away the altars and put them under the protection of the Komo chief of Koulikoro, and the members participated in the ceremonies of this locality. Moridje went to Nyamina and, in the same way as Garou, incited the members to engage in a kind of rivalry with the Komo of Koulikoro. In the course of a ceremony celebrated in this latter village, he called forth the Komo of Nyamina, using the authority attached to his father's name, and offerred a male goat to both groups. The two chiefs refused, arguing with reason that one victim could not satisfy two Komo. Moridje paid no attention and brought the two maskers face to face with the goat between them. A fight took place with the animal as a pawn, each masker using his magical powers to win it, and the members gathered behind their respective masks shouting: "the goat is ours." Later, the mask wearer also died prematurely.

To avoid the possibility that members will give their allegiance to two Komo, they are made to lick the mask once again, while the following prayer is recited: "If you lick the mask, may you not make the flãvlãña, may you not perpetrate a betrayal" (1). If, after swear-

1. Nye komo kun no, i kana seka flãvlãña kẹ, nye komo kun no, i kana seka dyãfa kẹ.

ing this oath, the party betrays it, he becomes "a rotten person" (matolilo) and loses the esteem and confidence of his companions.

As the young men grow with years and increase in knowledge, the instruction they are given is increasingly comprehensive. The head of the Komo, accompanied by men of his age grade, takes the postulant into the bush and questions him about his intentions and aims. Before indicating to him the group to which he is to be attached and introducing its members to him, he teaches him by drawing on the ground the combination of signs representing the arrangement in the universe of the Komo society, a combination which is usually reproduced before each ceremony and which permits the participants to recognize their place (see Fig. 12).

This drawing, called wolo ti, "sign of the generation," is composed of two long lines cutting each other at right angles and oriented

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according to the cardinal points. The point of juncture is placed in the center of a square called bara kene, "rhythm of space," the internal angles of which are armed with hooks. The two crossed lines are /157/ the symbol of the multiplication and extension of beings and things in the universe which is represented by the central square. The four angle hooks express the creation rotating upon itself (1). It is therefore,

1. See p. 20. We have here a special representation of the swastika whose branches are turned toward the center.

a schematic representation of the order and movement of the universe.

Along the extension of the diagonal lines outside the central square are drawn five signs which are each the symbol of a category of initiates or of a ritual object; these signs also indicate the place of the participants during the ceremonies.

On the eastern and western branches are placed the signs of the older initiates:

1. dyɛ, "union." Sign of the Komo Society in its entirety, the body of its members.

2. doniya, "knowledge." The point of the angle is "the point of knowledge" and its opening "the collective voice of the society." We are dealing here with the science which the initiates possess.

3. bako, "link." This closed sign expresses the ties which bind the initiates one to another and to the Komo, as well as the group spirit of which they must give proof.

4. sõni, "good will, consent." The point of departure of the stroke from the line indicates that the initiate is free to enter the society, to climb the steps of the successive grades indicated by the broken line, but not to leave it, and that he must have the will to follow the rules of the organization.

5. tyɛ̃, "truth." The members must be sincere. The two symmetrical hooks indicate that one must begin with truth and end with it.

6. tyɛ̃ sere, "evidence of truth." This drawing, testimony to the preceding, is sometimes attributed to strangers who come to attend the ceremony and recognize the conventional signs (2).

2. See p. 211.

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7. bẽni so, "house of agreement." Evidence of the sign 1, it represents a sickle, symbol of the house and of the union of the members. In serious cases, to stop a quarrel or to settle a difference, the Komo chief presents an ancient sickle and says: "It is the proof of the agreement, it is the evidence of the union" (1).

1. Beni so yeta do, dye šere do.

8. ǰigi so, "house of support." The dot symbolizes the komo so and the whole recalls the support which the chief offers the members. Orphans sit in the spot where this sign is drawn.

/158/ 9. so ba, "big house." The drawing represents "the egg of the world" and marks the spot where the oldest geomancer in the village stands alone.

10. komba, "big door." Sign and place of the person who performs the sacrifice, for the sacrifice "opens the doors" and puts man into contact with the invisible.

On the northern branch are placed the signs which concern the young initiates.

11. timidẽ, "circumcised." This refers to those circumcised in the next to the last age grade. The sign is that of the completed person (2).

2. See G. Dieterlen, "Les signes des Kéita du Mandé /Signs of the Kéita among the Mande/," l'Homme. Cahiers d'ethnologie, de géographie, de linguistique (in press).

12. timidẽ kle, "circumcised of the last age grade." The drawing shows the incomplete person.

13. tyi dẽ, "son of work." These are the sons of the kworę duga (3). The sign, drawn inverse to that of the person, expresses the /159/

3. See p. 220.

necessary disturbances and the pleasantries brought by these dignitaries to the Kworè and Komo ceremonies.

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14. soni dɛ̃, "son of the sacrifice." Drawn on the place for the sacrificer's son, the sign includes a horizontal line representing the knife, for the son may be called upon to replace his father in performing his duty during the ceremonies.

15. yeleka tigela, "the laughing man who cuts." This is the individual in charge of proclaiming the good or bad position of the victims which have been sacrificed.

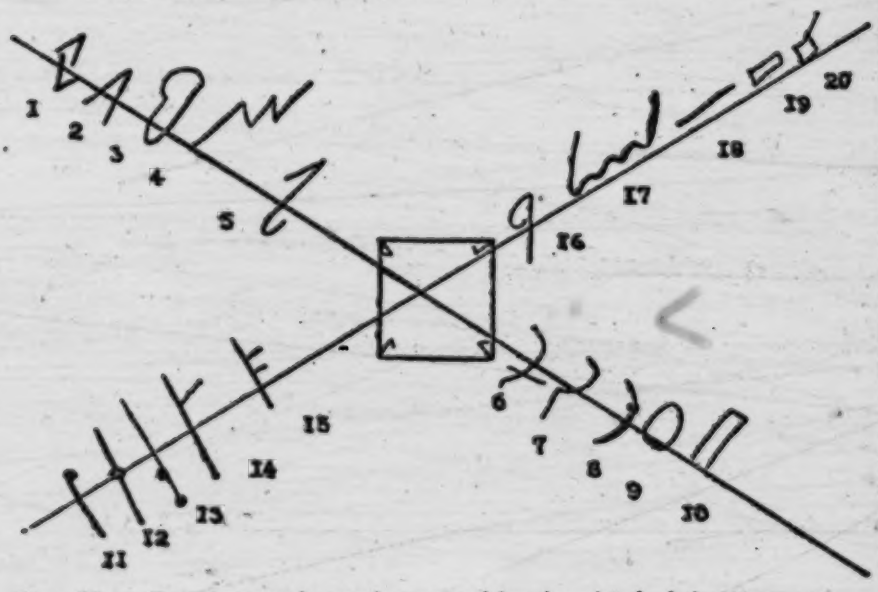

Fig. 12 — Drawing made on the ground by the chief of the Komo to mark, by their signs, the places of the participants during the ceremonies. This drawing, observed in the village of Dougoutiguibougou, is complete. When the branches forming an x are missing, the central square is always represented. (Drawing by an informant)

On the southern branch are placed the signs representing the blacksmiths; they relate to the institution of circumcision and to the functioning of the Komo of which these artisans are the dignitaries.

16. boffema, "honored person." Place of the aged blacksmiths.

17. wara da dyuru, "string from the mouth of the man armed with hooks." This is the small string of the flute, called "voice" of the Komo.

18. wara da, "mouth of the man armed with hooks." The flute of the Komo.

794 19. pembele. This sign represents both the society's pembele and
869 the board of the same name used for circumcision.
532 20. gosilãnde. The sign designates the primitive club and the small mallet used in circumcising.

The ensemble of these figures, representing a summary of the universe in its arrangement and its movement, forms the scene upon which the actors in the ceremony take their places. The latter are in a way the living embodiment of these drawings as well as the movements which change the order of presentation and must be executed with special precautions. In effect, any change made in the arrangement of the actors in the scene is felt to have repercussions in the universal organization. This is why the movements of each one give rise to rituals of forgiveness and purification concerning the sign corresponding to him (1).

1. See below.

F. Ceremonies of the Komo

794 The ceremonies in which the mask participates take place several
796 times a year according to the decision of the members. Their purpose is to discuss the interests of the society, to make joint decisions assuring the prosperity of its members, to promote harvesting, and to commemorate the organization of the Komo.

Three principal ceremonies are celebrated: the first, called /160/ "anniversary of the Komo" (komo sanyelema), at the end of the dry season; the second after the harvest, for offering of the first produce, as the mask is never taken into the fields at the time of cultivation; the third during the cold season at the time of circumcision. They involve sacrifices offered in the cemetery in honor of the dead as well as divining rites. Occasional ceremonies may also take place inbetween upon the membership's decision; the mask is taken out for purifications. The neighboring societies are generally invited to
[574] attend the reunions and the drinking which follow (2).

2. The important Komo chiefs are thus consulted by strangers in the village, who sometimes travel considerable distances.

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").
782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

89 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
794 the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
776 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them. All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
[535] Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog), and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
[534] slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
[84] genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

869 In addition to wearing the costume, which is white
794 (n'tomo djé) or yellow, black, etc. (n'tomo fign), the boy who
778 dances the dance of the genie hides his face in a frightful wooden mask on top of which are five, seven, and sometimes eight horns.

869 The n'tomo injects a whole organization into the world
794 of children. They quite naturally divide themselves into
561 small groups, each corresponding to a circumcision that is to take

[291 293]

Child wearing the loincloth called yaba.

place, and are thus all of the same age, born in the same year, or very nearly so. The member of each group who is the oldest -- be it by only one day -- becomes its head, and all the younger heads obey the head of the oldest group, the n'tomotigi, and his aide, the n'tomotigi siéré (1), who is drawn from

1. Siéré, "aide," "deputy."

the group which will be circumcised after that

869 of the n'tomotigi. /93/

794 These two children prepare the hunts for rats and lizards, or-
561 ganize the games and supervise them, and if an offence is committed by the band, it is up to them to discover the culprit. When quarrels, arguments, and fights arise among the children, they intervene, judge each case, and, if the matter is worth the trouble, the mischief-maker, or the one who is declared responsible, is severely beaten. All this

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Mask of the n'tomo, the children's fetish.

produces unity within the various groups and prevents them from coming to blows at every moment.

The little girls also have an organization into groups, but it lacks cohesion; it would have to be religious in nature, since religion is the basis of all unity in the Bambara country. Only at the time of excision does all this change, and then there is real cohesion among them.

796 Every year children sacrifice to the n'tomo genie through the
859 mediation of their head, the n'tomotigi. The day of the sacrifice is a day of great rejoicing which ends in flagellation. The material for